Rome May 19th 1863

My dear Tom

I take up my pen to give you a Rome
line after I think I answered your last chatty kind
letter of news, but I know how you like to hear from
me even when I have little or nothing to tell you
which I am afraid is the case now – Your friends
(Prouse) have left some 2 weeks since, indeed pr
numbers of English people have left, for Rome wa
tropick & so I begin to have leisure for all my vario
pursuits, my painting, my writing & now my music
with my diplomatic & Consular doings – But just no
a charming English Lady the wife of Col Fleming
begs me to remember her most kindly to you, she was
a Miss Chambers in a Brixton school – She spok
most kindly of your Caroline & there was no en
of her enquiries about you & yours – Emma
her beautiful singing also had a great share
of her praise, but you carried the palm of all
her praises & good wishes – indeed she went so
far that I began to feel that I ought to find
fault

with you, but I was unfortunate & could not call
up a single fault of any kind & was obliged to
confess ~~that~~ you to be a very dear brother

I remember in my last that I asked the great
favour of your utmost discretion, not to mention my
real age as it might prejudice me in my
official position & as my activity, my spirits, my
health & strength, enable me to carry out, more or
less my duties, I think I am entitled to
so much indulgence — How amused you'd be
to hear people often enquiring about my father
concluding that I must be a very old man in
the nature of things as I knew Keats & Shelley

You'll see in the "Atlantic" May - "for April
last my "Vicissitudes of Keats's fame" 'tis an American
work & I have engaged to write a similar essay
on Shelley, - if you chance to see it do tell me
your view of it

My Roman sojourn is more & more pleasant
for the power I have gained is so great that
now I seem to have every thing my own way
my only fear is that I may be tempted too

for I meet a drawback, but discretion I have
to a great extent & I can rely on it - yet often
in the midst of deep & touching audiences with
the Papal ministers, occupying the most
trying business, I cannot but reflect what a
change I have encountered, what a new life
for which I might have been unequal, but
there was no fear of that as such a consummate
master as Wm Gladstone knew me & judged me
yet it is a fearful position in its temptations, for
I am almost daily solicited to undertake some
political affair which might compromise me
with the "question of Rome" but I try to fight
shy of all such matters

The heat has just now begun which I enjoy
& tomorrow mor I begin my early mor walks before
6, buy my own fruit & return to breakfast at 7
we have strawberries, cherries, almonds & the vege-
tables are very abundant

Now again I beg you to consider my position
& help me all you can discreetly in screening
my age & let me be verging on 50 as they think

happy future to the end of my days — To add
to all these I enjoy such health & spirits such
perhaps at no period such strength & ardour
were ever at my command — & as I said before
(Cut this out & twist ourselves) the world thinks me
possibly approaching 50!! — But my expenses
are great £80 a year to my excellent Secty
£40 to two servants — my house costs £70
but now I have let part to Miss Cushman
to make a private theatre & I hope thus to
have a saving for dear Maria of £20 a year
The Lady I am expecting at this moment
Meanwhile I have been waiting for a £5 note to send
as I did before — Dec 16 as I cannot get one.
I send you an order for Mr F. B. Alston
Secty Foreign Office, I am sorry to give you
the trouble to go & receive it but I am sure
you will excuse it as I cannot help myself
I will write on Saty to dear Maria to answer
her letter & then I shall have seen the Lady
& settled the £20 a year Your loving brother
Joe
Mr Lord & Anchster are with me